



Nov. 10, 2009

Nigel Jacob  
Mayor's Office/CIO's Office  
Boston City Hall, Suite 703  
One City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201-1001

Dear Nigel,

It is a pleasure to inform you that Verizon Foundation will support Openairboston.net's Technology Goes Home @ School Program with a \$10,000 grant.

We are delighted to support this program again, and thank you and your colleagues for all you do to help bridge the digital divide within the City of Boston.

Enclosed is the check for \$10,000. Congratulations once again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Lee".

Stephanie Lee  
Regional Director of Public Affairs

**boston.com**

THIS STORY HAS BEEN FORMATTED FOR EASY PRINTING

GLOBE EDITORIAL

The Boston Globe

## On the grid, a chance to learn

April 10, 2008

LAST FALL, a group of students at Boston's Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School fanned out, laptops in hand, across the neighborhood surrounding the Dorchester school. The immediate goal was to test the signal strength of the nascent wireless Internet network in Grove Hall and Dudley Square.

Students put their findings on Google Maps and gave these results to [openairboston.net](http://openairboston.net), the nonprofit organization in charge of Boston's efforts to build a public Wi-Fi network. It was a lesson in technology, civic affairs, and even typing.

At schools like the Frederick, the most interesting computer instruction happens outside traditional computer labs. With planning help from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, the school is furthering students' education and cultivating technical skills. And it is doing so in part by using Web technologies and games that aren't strictly educational.

Frederick students are also in the pilot phase of the National Engineers Week Future City Competition, a national contest for seventh- and eighth-graders. They use the computer game SimCity to design their own metropolises. And they learn about engineering, city planning under budget constraints, and managing a long-term project.

All 650 students at the Frederick have access to their own laptop computers - which makes the school a state-funded laboratory for weaving computer technology into the curriculum. A 2004 report from the Legislature's Special Commission on Educational Technology championed this one-computer-per-student approach. Debra Socia, principal at the Frederick, credits the laptops with improving student engagement. And she's waiting to see if there will be an improvement in MCAS scores.

It's too soon to declare victory. But it's clear that schools have to keep up, incorporating technology to fuel students' success. ■

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GLOBE EDITORIAL

**The Boston Globe**

## Boston flips the digital switch

**April 2, 2008**

IN 2006, Mayor Menino had a vision of a wireless Boston with Internet access on nearly every park bench and street corner. He wasn't alone. Philadelphia had already announced an "unprecedented public/private partnership." EarthLink, the Internet service provider, would finance, build, and manage a 135-square-mile network there.

Menino ignored that hype. Instead he took seemingly odd advice from a wireless task force: Instead of contracting with an established tech company, the city should have a newly created nonprofit organization raise money to wire Boston.

Skepticism flared. If the nonprofit idea was so good, how come only Boston was doing it? The nonprofit - [openairboston.net](http://openairboston.net) - was created anyway. But technical and fund-raising woes made for a slow start, and plans for all of Boston to go wireless by 2008 were scrapped.

Nonetheless, on Monday the city made a proud stand at the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School in Dorchester, when [openairboston.net](http://openairboston.net) officially launched its first wireless pilot network in Grove Hall and Dudley Square. The coverage area is a modest 1.1 square miles, but it's a substantial victory, especially for the 8,000 households that can now buy Internet access for \$9.95 month.

Meanwhile, by February, EarthLink had announced that providing municipal wireless was "no longer consistent with the company's strategic direction." The company left Philadelphia and other cities in the lurch. Boston, in contrast, never expected an Internet company to provide something for nothing. It looks wise in retrospect.

The city still faces the considerable challenge of keeping this nonprofit effort alive. That means expanding earlier outreach efforts to more teenagers, parents, elderly residents, and small-business owners. This network's success will be measured in part by how many people say, "I never thought I'd use the Internet, but . . ."

The city and [openairboston.net](http://openairboston.net) also have to study usage patterns and learn how to serve the two target neighborhoods. Wireless networks in other neighborhoods should follow. Boston officials are looking at launching another pilot program that would cover the Fenway and Mission Hill.

Progress toward a completely wireless Boston may continue to be slow. But that's OK as long as the growth remains steady, and as long as the network keeps meeting the mayor's goals of promoting economic development, closing the digital divide, and improving city services.

Fifty years from now, Boston's long, demanding wireless journey could well be seen as an innovative civic leap. ■

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## **The Boston Digital Bridge Foundation Wins National Verizon Tech Savvy Award**

By

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### **Five Nonprofit Programs Recognized for Innovative Efforts to Help Parents Understand the Technology Used by Their Children**

LOUISVILLE, KY â€“ March 31, 2008 - The Boston Digital Bridge Foundation's Technology Goes Home @ School Program at the Lilla G. Frederick Middle School has been selected as the national winner of the Second Annual Verizon Tech Savvy Awards.

Through the Technology Goes Home program, Boston public school teachers provide computer and technology training to students and their parents afterschool or on weekends.

Since its inception in 1999, more than 3,500 families in Boston have completed the 25 hours of training. The Frederick Middle School, in collaboration with the Digital Bridge Foundation will have trained over 200 families this year.

"We have found that Tech Goes Home not only provides families with the opportunity to obtain 21st century skills, but also increases family engagement," said Deb Socia, principal of Frederick Middle School. "We find that increased parental involvement leads to increased academic success for the children."

As the National Verizon Tech Savvy Award winner, the Technology Goes Home program at Frederick Middle School will receive a \$25,000 award to continue and expand its program.

The school will receive its award Monday evening (March 31) at a banquet at the 17th annual National Conference on Family Literacy, hosted by the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), in Louisville, Ky.

The Verizon Tech Savvy Awards are a joint creation of NCFL, former First Lady of Iowa Christie Vilsack and the Verizon Foundation. It is the first national award designed to provide an incentive for grassroots, community-based nonprofit organizations and schools to create programs that demystify technology for parents, enabling them to better guide their children in the use of new media.

"For a parent to be actively involved in their child's education, they must have basic computer skills," said Vilsack. "A program, such as Technology Goes Home, is a stellar example of how teachers, parents and students can work together to improve student achievement."

In addition to the national winner, four other programs will be recognized as regional winners and each will receive a \$5,000 grant. The regional winners are:



- Computers for Youth Foundation's Take IT Home Program, in New York, N.Y., which bolsters parent and caregiver new media skills through training workshops. The program provides funding for participants to purchase a computer for their home and provides access to free online resources.
- National Institute on Media and the Family's Through-u-Families Become MediaWise, in Minneapolis, which provides cutting-edge resources and education to parents and caregivers about the impact of current media trends on children's health, behavior, pre-literacy skills and school readiness.
- Pima Community College Foundation's Family Technical Education Curriculum, in Tucson, Ariz., which teaches basic technology skills through creative student- and staff-generated projects such as newsletters, table and graph creation, yearbook and book creation, and Internet search projects.
- Santa Barbara Partners in Education's Computers for Families program in Santa Barbara, Calif., which increases tech familiarity by introducing computers with Internet access to fourth-grade students and their families in 30 schools. Students are assigned technology-based homework and share what they learn in school with their parents.

"To truly improve literacy and education for the 21st century, learning must stretch beyond the classroom and into community programs and homes," said Verizon Foundation President Patrick Gaston. "These programs all highlight how technology can be a valuable tool in enhancing educational opportunities for students and their parents."

In addition to the Verizon Tech Savvy Awards presentation, those attending the banquet will be treated to a live mystery literary caper that integrates real-world literacy experts and their virtual avatar counterparts. Led by CBS national correspondent Byron Pitts and Verizon Business Chief Information Officer Judy Spitz, the virtual scavenger hunt will allow conference attendees to search for clues to answer a series of riddles that lead to the discovery of a fictitious lost collection of Ernest Hemingway's original works. With the help of Pitts and Spitz, attendees will scour through the social media Web site [secondlife.com](http://secondlife.com) and educational Web site [Thinkfinity.org](http://Thinkfinity.org), and learn how both are applicable to students in learning environments today.

[Thinkfinity.org](http://Thinkfinity.org) [1] is the Verizon Foundation's free, comprehensive program and online portal to 55,000 educational and literacy resources for teachers, parents, students and community programs. Resources include standards-based, grade-specific, K-12 lesson plans and engaging interactive activities provided in partnership with many of the nation's leading education and literacy organizations. [Thinkfinity.org](http://Thinkfinity.org) also includes the Thinkfinity Literacy Network, which includes research and evidence-based resources and practices for literacy for child and adult learners.

"We take for granted that children today are digital natives, but in reality, they are being prepared for the future by their parents, their teachers and their community leaders -- many of whom are digital immigrants," said Sharon Darling, president & founder of NCFL. "That's why this award and the resources provided by [Thinkfinity.org](http://Thinkfinity.org) are so important."

Details of the programs honored at the Verizon Tech Savvy Awards will be added to the Thinkfinity Literacy Network to serve as an educational resource, highlighting best practices and approaches for technology literacy for people of all ages.

Those resources can be accessed online at [www.thinkfinity.org/literacynetwork](http://www.thinkfinity.org/literacynetwork) [2].

The Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications, supports the



advancement of literacy and K-12 education through its signature program, Thinkfinity.org, and fosters awareness and prevention of domestic violence. In 2007, the foundation awarded more than \$67.4 million in grants to nonprofit agencies in the United States and abroad. The foundation also matched the charitable donations of Verizon employees and retirees, resulting in \$25.1 million in combined contributions. Through Verizon Volunteers, one of the nation's largest employee volunteer programs, Verizon employees and retirees have volunteered more than 3 million hours of community service since Verizon's inception in 2000.

For more information on the foundation, visit [www.verizon.com/foundation](http://www.verizon.com/foundation) [3].

**The National Center for Family Literacy** is the worldwide leader in family literacy. More than 1 million families have made positive educational and economic gains as a result of NCFL's work, which includes training more than 150,000 teachers and thousands of volunteers. For more information, contact 1-877-FAMLIT-1 or visit [www.famlit.org](http://www.famlit.org) [4].

**Verizon Communications Inc.** (NYSE:VZ), headquartered in New York, is a leader in delivering broadband and other wireline and wireless communication innovations to mass market, business, government and wholesale customers. Verizon Wireless operates America's most reliable wireless network, serving nearly 66 million customers nationwide. Verizon's Wireline operations include Verizon Business, which delivers innovative and seamless business solutions to customers around the world, and Verizon Telecom, which brings customers the benefits of converged communications, information and entertainment services over the nation's most advanced fiber-optic network. A Dow 30 company, Verizon employs a diverse workforce of nearly 235,000 and last year generated consolidated operating revenues of \$93.5 billion. For more information, visit [www.verizon.com](http://www.verizon.com) [5].

**VERIZON'S ONLINE NEWS CENTER:** Verizon news releases, executive speeches and biographies, media contacts, high quality video and images, and other information are available at Verizon's News Center on the World Wide Web at <http://www.verizon.com/news> [6]. To receive news releases by e-mail, visit the News Center and register for customized automatic delivery of Verizon news releases.

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#### Links:

- [1] <http://Thinkfinity.org>
- [2] <http://www.thinkfinity.org/literacynetwork>
- [3] <http://www.verizon.com/foundation>
- [4] <http://www.famlit.org>





# Technology Goes Home @ School Enhances Family Involvement

Case Study: Timilty Middle School SY '06-'07

## About Technology Goes Home @ School

The TGH@School program is administered through the child's Boston Public School. Families attend an initial informational meeting at their child's school, and program training is in a group setting with peers. The child's teacher conducts the training, creating an opportunity for parents and teachers to communicate regularly and get to know each other.

## The goals of the TGH @ School

- Help children improve academic performance
- Encourage parents and children to work together toward a common goal
- Enhance the relationship between parents and teachers
- Help adults prepare for better employment opportunities

## About the Boston Digital Bridge Foundation

The Foundation provides technology training and computers to Boston families and students by supporting collaborations of community based organizations and school that encourage life-changing attitudes in parents and students.

## For more information

[www.BostonDigitalBridgeFoundation.org](http://www.BostonDigitalBridgeFoundation.org)

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CITY OF BOSTON  
MAYOR THOMAS M. MENINO

In 1999, Technology Goes Home (TGH), a technology training program formed to minimize the digital divide, launched in neighborhood centers with 65 community partners across the City of Boston. The program, which encourages families to learn together by taking a 12-week technology training course, proved to be a worthy model for the Boston Public Schools, and expanded in 2002, to include Technology Goes Home @ School (TGH@S). Prior to the Timilty Middle School in Roxbury, TGH@S was solely hosted in elementary schools for grades 4-6. In 2004, the Timilty became the first middle school pilot for TGH@S. Always on board for programming that fosters parental engagement in the school system, Ms. Valeria Lowe-Barehmi, principal at the Timilty, added Technology Goes Home @ School to the roster of programs offered at her school. Along with the Science Fair, the ½ Mile Run, and Promising Pals, Technology Goes Home is a new tradition at the Timilty. Ms. Lowe-Barehmi sees the rise in participation in the school's Open House and other programs as a direct result of family involvement in Technology Goes Home.

"TGH helps us to strengthen what we are trying to do here," says Ms. Lowe. "We want parents to be involved with their child's education. When the family can support what the child is learning, the child can achieve success. In the TGH@S program, we can engage parents at a deeper level with their child's curriculum." Ms. Lowe goes on to explain that the success rate, measured in academic performance, attendance, and leadership, is significantly higher with Technology Goes Home students. She also assures that the school site and parent councils are heavily populated with TGH parents. TGH serves as a platform for parents to network with one another, with the school faculty and staff, thereby supporting lasting parental commitment with many aspects of the school experience beyond TGH.



Ms. Beverly Williams, one of the 2007 BPS Educators of the Year, Mr. David Case, and Ms. Angel Simpson.

*"TGH helps us to strengthen what we are trying to do here. We want parents to be involved with their child's education. When the family can support what the child is learning, the child can achieve success. In the TGH@S program, we can engage parents at a deeper level with their child's curriculum."*

— Ms. Valeria Lowe-Barehmi



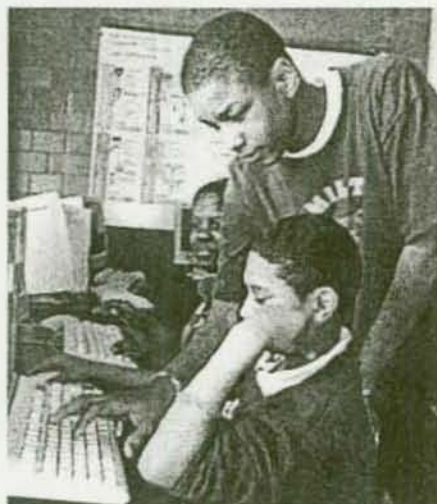
Ms. Valeria Lowe-Barehmi, Timilty Principal.



Angel Simpson, David Case, and Beverly Williams in addition to their regular classroom duties, are all TGH teachers at the Timilty. They have seen the program grow in the three years it has been implemented at their school. "As a TGH@S teacher, I become an easy access point for parents to learn more about the school and stay involved with their child's education. We get to know one another and any intimidation between parent and teacher disappears," says Ms. Williams. When the parents believe that their teacher cares, there is more trust and investment with what is happening at school. Mr. Case explains that "Working with my students and their parents creates an opportunity for parents to learn about the issues at school." Ms. Simpson adds, "This connection is what helps to build academic and behavioral improvement in my students."

*"As a TGH@S teacher, I become an easy access point for parents to learn more about the school and stay involved with their child's education. We get to know one another and any intimidation between parent and teacher disappears."*

— Ms. Beverly Williams, Timilty School Teacher, one of the 2007 BPS Educators of the Year



Raymond Perez and Stephen Lima, students at the Timilty, work together in Beverly Williams' TGH class.

Families participate in TGH for different reasons. Some simply want to learn more about computers. Some want to take part in a family activity. Some are looking for a way to access school resources that are a challenge to access due to language or cultural disconnections. For the Grace family, who look for activities to do together, Technology Goes Home @ School was the perfect fit.

For Mr. Grace, TGH@S is a "...total package experience where I can spend time with my children and I know that we are learning from one another." The Grace family has been instrumental in recruiting families to be a part of TGH@S by speaking on



The Grace Family: (Clockwise) Mrs Sharon Grace, Mr Rory Grace, Rory Grace and Steven Grace

behalf of the program at events like BPS conferences and open houses. Parents share concerns and ask Mrs. Grace about her experience in the program. She reassures, "When you start doing it, it really becomes important to you and you make the time. My child is able to show me how to do something that I didn't even know that he knew. It makes us both feel good. Plus, Rory's grades have improved. He's gone from a C- to a B+ in Math and has brought up his grades in Civics, Writing, and Language Arts."

The Grace family is one of 3000 families that have graduated from the TGH and TGH@S programs. TGH@S is currently hosted by 50 elementary, middle, and high schools throughout the Boston Public School system.



Rachelle Pierre, Timilty 7th grader.

*"The Technology Goes Home @ School Program research project helped me to investigate my choices of high schools that I may want to attend."*

— Rachelle Pierre, grade 7



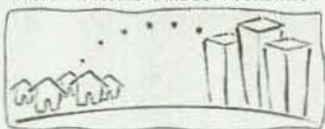
Dameon Hyman, Orlen Hyman and Alicia Williams Hyman. The TGH Family of the Year Award Winners at The Timilty Middle School

*"...TGH was very interesting. Now I use the Internet to check on the news back home in Jamaica... there are always new things to learn! I also wanted to spend time with my son. I wasn't disappointed!"*

— Alicia Williams Hyman, TGH Family of the Year Award Winner



BOSTON DIGITAL BRIDGE FOUNDATION



CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THEIR POTENTIAL

## Technology Goes Home @ School Builds Parental Involvement

Case Study: O'Donnell School SY '05-'06

### About the Technology Goes Home @ School Program:

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### For more information:

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Boston Public Schools



CITY OF BOSTON

Thomas M. Menino  
Mayor

The O'Donnell Elementary School in East Boston is using technology training to create a culture of parental involvement. The results are both impressive and surprising – for parents, teachers, and the school as a whole. The O'Donnell School has graduated over 40 families in the three years that it has participated in the TGH@School program.

"Working with the Boston Digital Bridge Foundation's Technology Goes Home@School program, (TGH@S)" explains O'Donnell's Principal, Dr. Robert Martin "we offer 12 weeks of computer training for students and their parents. Three years ago, we started with the idea that de-mystifying computers would be a good thing. What we've discovered is that this powerful learning experience also de-mystifies the school. As parents meet teachers and other parents, they become engaged in other school activities and more willing to take on leadership roles. In fact, virtually all of the school's site council parents and a majority of the parent council members are TGH@S alums."

"TGH@S has clearly become a gateway to greater parental involvement," says Ellen Cooper, O'Donnell's Computer Teacher, a TGH@S instructor, and a 2005 Boston Public School Teacher of the Year. "For many of our parents, English is a second language. At first, they were shy about interacting. But as they found that the teachers were actually there to help, shyness gave way to confidence."



(l to r) Ellen Howe, Fourth Grade Teacher; Dr. Robert Martin, Principal; Ellen Cooper, Computer Teacher and a 2005 Boston Public School Teacher of the Year

*"...virtually all of the school's site council parents and a majority of the parent council members are TGH @ School alums..."*

*-Dr. Robert Martin,  
Principal*



School Site Council (l to r) Dr. Martin and TGH@S alums, Jeremiah Rosa, Martha Velez, and Gloribel Mota. School Site Council meetings address issues ranging from how to handle the school's budget to analyzing which classrooms may need renovations to looking at curriculum with a critical eye.





Tech Boston Assistant, Christina Osorio works with student, Sonia Pena on her PowerPoint Presentation, "What is a tsunami?"

**Tech Boston**, bi-lingual high school students served as TGH@S assistants and were instrumental in bridging the language gap. The younger students looked up to these interns, who became positive role models. Students also helped overcome language barriers, often serving as interpreters for the parents.

**Martha Velez**, mother of a 4th grader, says, "TGH@S is helping me learn English. I've also signed up for the school's ESL class." In addition, Martha has become an active member of the School Site Council.

Parent, **Gloribell Mota**, adds,



Shawnda and Amber Pugliese put final touches on their PowerPoint project titled "Hurricanes" They will make their presentation to their class on the final night celebration of their 12 week TGH@S program.

"I loved the computer classes and the collaborative learning with my son, Edward. It made me feel connected to the school, the teachers, and other parents. That's why I joined the School/Parent Council and the School Site Council."

"You can just see the comfort level of the parents go up," says 4th grade teacher **Ellen Howe**, who is a TGH@S instructor. "And as it does, you see their involvement go up. The lesson



Martha Velez and her daughter Michelle Perez. Martha is a member of the School Site Council and Parent Council, and has become an advocate for other Spanish speaking families. Michelle has been accepted to Advanced Work Class for next year.

plans for TGH@S are based on the school curriculum, and this gives parents insights into what their children are studying, as well as opportunities to discuss school curriculum with teachers. A mutual respect grows as kids and parents learn together."

**Dong Young Kim** is happy that he and his 4th grade son are improving their English and writing skills through TGH, and he is also finding that it's fun to help out with school field trips and meet other parents.

**Shawnda Pugliese** says that TGH has brought her closer to her daughter



Ellen Howe works with Dong Young Kim, his daughter, Jung In, and his son, Joo Yoeb during their after-school class.

and made it easier for her to attend parent/teacher conferences and other school meetings.

"Parent involvement is crucial," **Principal Martin** says. "TGH opens a door so parents feel involved and empowered. They appreciate the teachers, value the educational experience for their kids, and want to be more involved. They take on leadership roles and it makes all the difference in the world. When parent are involved, we see kids become better learners and teachers become better teachers. The technology training is great. The increased parental involvement is even better. It's a huge bonus."



The Hugh R. O'Donnell Elementary School is located in East Boston and has an enrollment of 214 children, of which 73% are minorities and 91% qualify for the free and reduced school program.